

AJL

11. (Amended) A substance sampling and dispensing system comprising:
an aspirate/dispense head;
an array according to claim 3; and
positioning means for positioning the one or more sampling devices ready
for sampling individually or in parallel.

12. (Amended) A system according to claim 11, further comprising an actuator
to fold in use single or multiple sampling devices away from the plane of the
strip or other sampling devices on the strip.

14. (Amended) A system according to claim 11, further comprising at least one
more actuator to aspirate or dispense samples from the same sampling devices.

AJL

15. (Amended) A system according to claim 11, wherein the strip of sampling
devices is fed from a reel or fan-fold box.

16. Amended) A system according to claim 11, wherein the strip of used
sampling devices is fed to a waste container or reel.

REMARKS

The purpose of this Preliminary Amendment is primarily to correct the improper form of the claims of this application as originally filed. In particular, this application as filed contained multiple dependent claims (i.e., Claims 6-16) dependent upon other multiple dependent claims so as to be improper as to form under United States practice. The foregoing Preliminary Amendment corrects these formal defects in the application as filed. In addition, the foregoing Preliminary Amendment corrects several minor errors in the phraseology of the claims as originally filed that are unrelated to the substance thereof.

A "VERSION SHOWING CHANGES MADE TO THE CLAIMS" is attached hereto as required by the Rules.

Since the foregoing Preliminary Amendment is directed solely to matters of form and/or minor errors in phraseology, no new matter is introduced thereby and the scope of the invention claimed remains the same as it was in the application as originally filed. Further, it is respectfully submitted that the entry of the foregoing Preliminary Amendment at this stage will facilitate the future prosecution of this application by allowing the Applicants and the Examiner to focus upon substantive issues rather than upon formal matters. Accordingly, entry of the foregoing amendments to the claims of this application as originally filed is respectfully requested in response to this communication.

Applicants believe that no additional fee is required for consideration of the within Preliminary Amendment. However, if for any reason the fee paid is inadequate or credit is owed for any excess fee paid, you are hereby authorized and requested to charge Deposit Account No. **04-1105**.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: September 18, 2002

By: David A. Tucker
David A. Tucker
Reg. No. 27,840

Dike, Bronstein, Roberts & Cushman
Intellectual Property Practice Group
EDWARDS & ANGELL, LLP
P.O. Box 9169
Boston, MA 02209
Tel.: (617) 517-5508
313242

VERSION SHOWING CHANGES MADE TO THE CLAIMS

Additions shown underlined; Deletions shown in brackets

Please cancel Claim 13, without prejudice.

Please amend Claims 2, 5-12 and 14-16 as follows:

2. (Amended) A method according to claim 1, performed by two or more aspirate/dispense heads such that sampling devices aspirate samples at one head and then travel to a subsequent head to perform further aspiration or dispensing.
5. (Amended) An array according to [any one of the preceding claims 3 or 4] claim 3, wherein sprocket holes are incorporated in the strip to facilitate drive and indexing of the strip.
6. (Amended) An array according to [any of claims 3 to 5] claim 3, wherein the body of each sampling device is used as a gear track to facilitate drive and indexing of the strip.
7. (Amended) An array according to [any of claims 3 to 6] claim 3, wherein the sampling devices are positive displacement pipettes.
8. (Amended) An array according to [any of claims 3 to 6] claim 3, wherein the sampling devices are air displacement pipette tips.
9. (Amended) An array according to [any of claims 3 to 6] claim 3, wherein the sampling devices are capillaries.
10. (Amended) An array according to [any of claims 3 to 6] claim 3, wherein the sampling devices are sampling pins.

11. (Amended) A substance sampling and dispensing system comprising:
an aspirate/dispense head;
an array according to [any of claims 3 to 10] claim 3; and
positioning means for positioning the one or more sampling devices ready
for sampling individually or in parallel.
12. (Amended) A system according to claim 11, further comprising an actuator
to fold [,] in use single or multiple sampling devices away from the plane of the
strip or other sampling devices on the strip.
14. (Amended) A system according to [any of claims 11 to 13] claim 11, further
comprising at least one more actuator to aspirate or dispense samples from the
same sampling devices.
15. (Amended) A system according to [any of claims 11 to 14] claim 11, wherein
the strip of sampling devices is fed from a reel or fan-fold box.
16. Amended) A [device] system according to [any of claims 11 to 15] claim 11,
wherein the strip of used sampling devices [are] is fed to a waste container or
reel.